BALLET *today*

CH 1949

SONIA AROVA

1/-

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TRANSLATED BY ARNOLD HASKELL

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BALLET TO-DAY

Managing Editor; B. G. Herschel. *Representative in New York;* Hope Sheridan; *in Spain;* Pilar Llorens; *in Paris;* Ferdinand Reyna; *in Venice;* Robert Paterson; *in Berlin;* Eva Bulow.

Editor: **Peter Craig-Raymond**

Preview..

ANSWERING my article on criticism in ballet (in the February BALLET TODAY), one reader quotes to me the melodramatic 'O god, put back thy universe, and give me yesterday'. This could have better been Shakespeare's 'O, call back yesterday, bid time return' and the whole thing snipped at one go from one of James Agate's Egos.

Agate, of course, is prime example of this exploitation of age as a marketable, critical commodity. This north countryman galloped into the theatre on a Manchester whippet and flogged it for years after it had wobbled into a decline of gangrene horsemeat.

Agate was a degenerate, quoting, requoting and blissfully misquoting from his favourite and so-often mentioned 'culture' and thinking a French quip on Sarah better for the *Sunday Times* than an English summing-up of the play in hand. He once said the critic must praise first, damn second. Agate, contrary to himself, damned everything in the immediate except Welsh pit-boys who stopped choralising long enough to pour exquisites about Irving or Kean. The past, the past, the hornrimmed, hallowed past . . .

A striking photograph of the famous ballerina Genevieve Lespagnol in the ballet of Jean Cocteau's LA DAME A LA LICORNE which she created with Boris Trailine.

WRINKLES

Byron may have written 'Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow' but too many critics in ballet can wriggle out with many a wrinkle on the brow of time!

A teacher who advertises in this magazine was telephoned last week by one of the other dance publications. Would she advertise in *his* magazine. 'But no', she said, 'I teach in a classroom, not in the museum'. This story, not apochryphal, makes my point exactly.

I write, and the critic is a critic only when he writes, for the immediate present. Past reference is one thing, a trading on unassailable (because long dead) comparison is an unjust other.

A work needs defects to show up its qualities (I am in Agatean mood, I regret!) but those defects should be pinpointed inside the contemporary scene, not back-referenced to the lithographic past.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

Writing some seven or eight years ago, J. B. Priestley said: 'It has been my experience that the older . . . critics have on the whole been too hostile to experimental work Often. they grumble (as well they might) when given the same old stuff. But too often they grumble still harder when shown something that is not the same old stuff. They are apt to think that . . . technique arrived at final perfection about the time when they were young. An art, if it is to remain vital, must avoid falling into routine'.

And, this in italics, '*the critic must not take to his scrapbook merely because this facile routine jogs him as somnambusically as drinking cocoa in his bedroom slippers*'.

Or, to misquote Pope:

'Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see
Has no more seen *What Was* that what shall be . . .

Antonio-*page* 9 de Cuevas-*page* 15 Markova-*page* 19

Coverwise

SONIA AROVA

SONIA AROVA was born in Sofia, Bulgaria.

When only six years of age she was discovered by Chaliapin, at the Opera House, Sofia.

She came to Paris in 1936 and worked with Olga Preobajenska and Serge Lifar. She won a Dance Championship for classical and character dance at the age of eleven and a half.

At this age she was in the film 'La mort du Cygne' in which she took the part of the 'little rat'. Later she came to England with an English family with whom she had been staying in June 1940. She became attached to the International, and Metropolitan Ballets under Victor Gsovsky and also with the Ballet Rambert.

Returning to Paris in 1948 she was again with Olga Preobajenska and Serge Lifar. At the moment she is very pleased to be working with a new ballet master, Erclos Wood, who seems to be developing her style and personality. She has appeared in Lisbon, Madrid, Hambourg and Instanbul. Having toured, she is the star of the new Ballet des Champs Elysees.

She has created two ballets: as Azucena in *Le Revanche* (Ruth Page—Verdi—A. Clave) and as the young girl in *Impromtu au bois* (R. Page—I. Ibert—W. Wakevitch). As guest artist with the original Ballet Russe de Colonel de Basil, she danced *Le Coq d'Or*, *Paganini*, *Le Mariage d'Aurore* and *Lac des Cygnes*, etc.

She was engaged by the Festival Ballet when Markowa left. She has danced most prinicapal roles and was a great success in *Don Quichotte*. She is the first English dancer to have been invited to Japan by Mr. Komaki in 1952 where she appeared at the head of her own company touring the principal towns for a period of two months.

A difficult task as she had to give the original choreography of *La belle au bois Dormant* (4 acts), *Le Lac des Cygnes* (4 acts), *Sylphides*, in which she had to take rehearsals, at the same time dancing the principal roles herself, and giving lessons to the company. She joins the new Ballet Comique next month

THE DE CUEVAS

Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas at the Stoll Theatre, January 18 for three weeks.

The season showed:

LA TERTULIA, The Two Rivals, is a backstage tragi-comedy placed in the Madrid of the middle 1800's. The rivals are a Spanish dancer—star of the theatre—and a French guest artist. Their jealousies: success, and the premier danseur. An English balletomane provides spice, and diamonds, for the rivals. Backstage ballets never contrive the gusto of Hollywood's backstage theatre musicals. Even Capuletti's idea of painting a well-worn auditorium as backcloth assisted **LA TERTULIA** little. The dancers never knew which audience to look—the backclothed, or the bored.

Jacqueline Moreau, the French guest, Wladimir Skouratoff and Ana Ricarda danced within the limits of Ricarda's choreography. But neither this, or **DONA INES DE CASTRO** which followed, argued Ana Ricarda's talent as a choreographer to me.

DONA INES DE CASTRO, second ballet on the programme, was again by Ricarda. Dull, dragging and morbid—the King of Portugal orders his son's lover murdered, regrets the order and 'dies of remorse'. Mad with despair, the prince crowns his dead lover and forces the court's genuflection to her before finding the councillor who guided his father's order and killing him. A stately morris dance against drab decor, the only effectful moment was in the final curtain when the prince leads his queen off the throne, forgetting she is dead, and has her fall at his feet.

BLACK SWAN GRAND PAS DE DEUX not merely saved, but virtually disembalmed the de Cuevas' first night. How degrading that a single excerpt from a fifty-year old ballet-decor-less, plot-less and, in this instance, falsely tempoed at the start, should make one instantly forget the tawdry misery of the two full preceding ballets!

The audience cheered, having something to cheer. Rosella Hightower missed, by a single slip, a tour de force of great dancing. As it was her bravura attack, her immense strength en pointe and her breadth of effect made nonsense of the 'new wine in old bottle' adage. Here was a bottle old, crusted by immature and slovenly precedent, relegated by the blase as a mere showstopper. But the new wine!

Hightower had a spring-quality, pinpoint-sharp leap of attack and sureness of physical resource which turned this grand pas de deux from a testing exercise into a triumph.

Her partner, Serge Golovine, provided the first stir of the evening. Gasps are not so frequent in the theatre that they should go unrecorded. Both Hightower and Golovine culled them from this Stoll house.

Golovine has the look of a teenage schoolboy which belies the dancing strength, theatrical verve and sheer technical sparkle of the man.

Ballet in Review

by PETER

CRAIG-RAYMOND

PRISONER IN THE CAUCASUS uses Kachaturian's **GAYANE** score, sadly misarranged by one Nicolas Stein. Skibine has taken part of the lore of Russia (the plot was a folk-tale, a poem by Pushkin and a novel of Tolstoi's before he ignored Turganev's advice to keep to literature) and made of it a thoughtful ballet.

Reminiscent in its ensembles of the Polovssion Dances, Skibine has worked above this level with several telling choreographic ideas. The first entrance—a gradual crecendo of horse manoeuvring—is effective against the evocative Kachaturian music. The dragging of the prisoner (Skibine) in front of the curtain is moving, well-thought theatre. And the use of Kachaturian's 'Blue Waltz' theme for the lovers is excellent. Emotional, yet thin in tone, the music conveys the combined passion and fear of their lovemaking.

The tale centres on a Russian officer, captured during the Russo-Caucasian War by the Turks, and taken back to their village as a slave. One of the village women falls in love with him and leads his escape. In despair at his going, mixed with fear for her own treachery of her people, she kills herself with a sabre.

Skibine has made for himself a proud, taut role which fits his powerful dancing well. Essentially simple, the dramatic intensity climaxes perfectly into the long, slow pas de deux with Marjorie Tallchief. This pas de deux, based on the sensuous leg-entwinings of the lovers is charged with the fear of discovery and departure which carries it above the usual leg-play pas de deux.

I found this Skibine ballet an atmospheric, sensual and thoughtful small masterpiece.

NIGHT SHADOW, the Balanchine ballet, is still moving in part and boasts the best decor of the repertoire, by Andre Delfau. Tallchief's performance as the Shadow is a weird, lovely thing and some of the choreography of the meeting between her and the Poet, Skibine, is well-contrived. But the notorious Balanchine tricks of running around the stage, interlocking arms, and playing in-and-out-the-windows . . . these still annoy.

THE DUMB WIFE is a little joke based on Anatole France who wrote better things than this. Golovine is wasted, until his exit, and only Joyce Van Der Veen has the one part worth playing. She is a comedienne of useful talent, a ballet built around her inventiveness might be well worth the Marquis' consideration.

ANNABEL LEE is, in my opinion, one of the loveliest and most thoughtful of this company's works. So simple, yet intense in its young way. Skibine and Tallchief danced magnificently. Again, Delfau's decor is commendable.

PIEGE DE LUMIERE has a moving death march but its hectic, incohesive flight of the bumble

Continued on page 18

SEASON

—As drawn by
JEAN TARGET

Rondo Cappriccioso

The Grey Angel

Ballet Digest

VAJIFDAR BALLET—the New Indian Ballet of **Shirin, Khurshed** and **Roshan Vajifdar** (seen in London at the Comedy Theatre in 1952)—hus just concluded a tour of Ceylon.

Now augmented by better theatrecraft, and after a television series, the company has had a magnificent reception. **Krishna Kutty** remains with them. It is possible that a second London season may be arranged for later this year.

AMERICAN newsmagazine, *Time*, ran a colour cover and long profile inside of **George Balanchine** during January. Balanchine's career was traced from starvation days in Russia, to musicals, to the New York City Ballet.

Tailpiece: after a long and involved explanation of Laban's choreographic notation method, the story ended—but Balanchine reads it stumblingly. But all Balanchine's work for the NYCB is **Laban**-notated for future reference.

PAUL GORDON'S full-length film *Listen to Music* has several ballet sequences. It was premiered last month at Filmbuehne Wien, Berlin.

AT its out-of-town opening (in New Haven, New Jersey) *Girl in Pink Tights* brought fair comment and wonderful praise. The first for the musical, the second for **Renee Jeanmaire.**

Dancing, singing and acting in this tale of a ballet company that mixes with a legitimate production to produce the first musical, Jeanmaire captivated American reviewers, one of whom assured her of 'a spot in entertainment's upper reaches'.

A COURSE of lectures and classes on the theory and practice of ballet production—a scheme for the teaching of choreography—was instituted during February by the Royal Academy of Dancing Production Club, under **Ursula Moreton** and **Claude Newman.** The Rococo Period is being studied and the first term ends on April 1.

A second term—from May 6—and a third are scheduled.

GALINA ULANOVA, **Igor Moiseyev** and **Rostislav Zakharov** have had a discussion on ballet reproduced in booklet form which is to be issed by the S.C.R. (14, Kensington Gardens, W.8) at 2s. 9d. by post.

A MIS-STATEMENT appeared in the February issue of the ballroom and ballet magazine *Dancing Times*. Writing of Miss **P. W. Manchester,** the first Editor of BALLET TODAY, she is referred to as its founder. This is not so. The founder and owner of BALLET TODAY assigned Miss Manchester as Editor and later passed control to her, before **Mr. B. G. Herschel** became owner Today BALLET TODAY is owned by Mr. B. G. Herschel in conjunction with **I. E. Herf.**

THE *Daily Sketch*, ever-vigilant in matters affecting the arts, devoted a page during February to **Marjorie Tallchief.** Their inspired subject: 'Is she a good mother?' The answer: 'No, not very'. Subject closed.

FROM Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, the 3D musical *Kiss Me Kate* from **Cole Porter's** stage play is one of the finest musicals I have seen and certainly leaves any recent rivals far behind in entertainment value.

A full script, uncommon in musicals, abetted by good colour, fast direction, an excellent cast and some indiarubber dancing from several boys makes *Kiss Me Kate* surprisingly welcome.

Tommy Rall dances Bill with impressive youthfulness and vitality, made outstanding by the huge entrances and exits 3D makes possible. Without doubt the dance film of the month, and I shall be surprised (again, and agreeably) if a better musical comes my way this year.

A PERFORMANCE in the current series of modern dance recitals at the Contemporary Dance Theatre, Toynbee Hall, on February 8 again, sadly, made blatant the faults in this type of work. Apart from poor technique, bad lighting, and other practical faults, the bad flaw is the misery and hardness of every item, every dancer. The world is a sad place—but we have our moments. Modern dance, apparently, has not. The drab greys and blacks cannot spell entertainment or even balanced art in the theatre. If modern dance is to achieve anything it must move forward more rapidly than classic ballet. The astounding thing is that, on this evidence, modern dance is still in the '20s and '30s while classical technique has modernized itself. I am by no means antagonistic to modern dance, but I refuse to feel sorry for performers all through an evening. The final comic mime relieved the gloom, but by then it was too late.

NICHOLAS BERIOSOFF leaves this month to produce *Romeo and Juliet* at the City Ballet Theatre in Tokyo. Photographs of this production will apear in BALLET TODAY as soon as possible.

LEONIDE MASSINE is to recreate his production and choreography of *Laudis Evangelli*, the passion play which he staged at the Perugia Cathederal during 1952.

A. V. COTON will talk on dance styles in films to the London Ballet Circle on April 2. Tickets are obtainable from Humberstone, 8, Carol Street, N.W.1 (send s.a.e., please!) and Coton will illustrate his talks with cuts from films of Anna Pavlowa, Maya Deren and Rene Clair. Readers will remember Mr. Coton was one of the trio—the other two, Peter Craig-Raymond and Edith Barking—who tape-recorded a discussion on cinedance in a recent BALLET TODAY.

CANNES —

JEAN GUERITTE

THE new ballet from the 'Ville des Anges' (Los Angeles) attributes its artistic responsibility to David Lichine, and has just made its debut at Cannes and Nice. *Divertissement Venitien* presumably classifies itself as a non-classical symphony by Balanchine. Its harmony, and purity of dignity, is in accordance with the exigencies of musical discipline. Congratulations, in this respect, to the score by the Italian composers Marcello and Cambini. It is indeed worth of Vivaldi and Corelli.

In spite of the fact that there is nothing outstandingly new, the music alone is of real value. But what has the choreographer done! This ingeniously malicious being with his humour style, his gracefulness and ease, followed by sharp movements cleverly displayed, all this gives one the impression of a 'false style'.

This does not strike one as being a 'work', but a mere attempt to gather together a group of dancers, in which Oleg Turine, Natalia Clare, Wilda Taylor, and Gene Marinaccio have been asked to participate. They are not artists, whilst Wladimir Ouktomsky is neither better or worse than when he was in the Ballet Charrat.

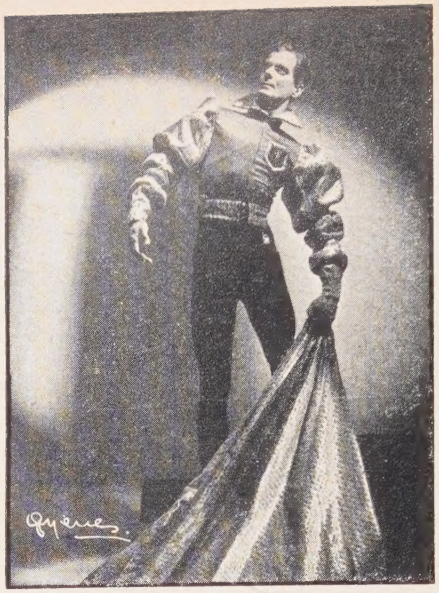
In *Hommage a Marius Petipa*, the *Oiseaux d'Or* is a dreary revival of Tchaikowski's Suite No. 2. The decor and costumes are by Fontcharova. The dullness of this can easily be associated to a fantasy on the lines of William Blake where 'gilded legend' seems to come to grief psychologically. There is too much imagination, which is unconvincing when blended with artificial alacrity.

Combats de Coqs is a ballet-comedy to music by Padre Antonio Soler. This is more adaptable to Lichine's style. There is good rhythm in spite of the excessive muscular effort of the *ensembles*. Little enthusiasm was shown.

It would seem that Lichine would have been wiser to have waited a while and practised his exercises to greater perfection. He cannot actually compete with the international ballet companies who have gained such publicity with their renowned stars. There is nothing to impress one in this company.

Tatiana Riabouchinska evokes the beauty of the past, this souvenir of which is most impressive.

We were indeed charmed by the intelligent classical technique of little Mary Gelber, Erin Martin, Susie Borree (Combats de Coqs) and the gracefulness of Meredith Leech (the little cat in the Golden Birds) and Dick Lerner showed remarkable agility.



Manuel Rozado in the Royal Peacock (*see Madrid*

and, in Madrid, the New Lichine Ballet was reviewed

TATIANA RIABOUCHINSKA with her husband David Lichine and their company of young American dancers have been playing to enthusiastic audiences in Madrid.

Riabouchinska has not lost that beautiful lyrical style for which she was famous in the days of de Basils' 'Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo', and her performance of the Prelude in *Les Sylphides* is very moving to witness. David Lichine unfortunately does not dance, but is the choreographer and artistic director of the company.

Besides the two ballerinas, Natalie Clare and Wilda Taylor, there are also some outstanding dancers in the company, such as Meredith Leech, Mary Gelder and Erin Martin. When one considers that in this company there are three dancers aged only thirteen who from time to time ably take leading roles, it is a case for commendation.

Oleg Tupine is the leading male dancer as well as the ballet master, but the men on the whole (with one or two exceptions) are not strong enough technically to support the ballerinas.

The choreography is clever and unusual, particularly in the ballet entitled *The Cock-Fight* which is an entertaining and amusing story of the cock-fight which takes place after Mass in a Spanish village.

SPAIN —

HERMA DIAS

MARIANELA DE MONTIJO at the age of twenty-one has formed, and is principal dancer of an exceptionally good company, and although not by any means a 'Prima Ballerina' is clever enough to use her ballet technique as a means to an end and not as an end in itself.

She is also responsible for the choreography of the dances, with the exception of those of Manuel Rosado (the principal male dancer), who is responsible for his own choreography.

Manuel Rosado has a strong sense of the dramatic, and his dancing which is of the free Central European style is combined with excellent mime which is shown to best advantage in his portrayals of Don Quixote and El Greco.

* * *

This company do not just merely present a succession of Spanish dances accompanied by castanets, but Spanish legends skilfully interwoven with authentic Spanish movements to produce the desired effect, and in one of their numbers which is an eighteenth century burlesque it is as though a Goya fresco had come to life.

The dancers on the whole are spontaneous and lively, and what many of them lack in technique they gain in artistry.

This performance has elicited great admiration from the dance-loving public in Madrid, and it is not surprising because their presentation is so well carried out as regards lighting, decor and costumes, and it is to be hoped that this company will visit London in the near future as their work is something out of the ordinary which cannot fail to be appreciated.

* * *

Karen Taft who was one of the prima ballerinas of the ballet company of Michel Fokine has by far the most outstanding school of ballet in Madrid, and has now joined forces with Birger Batholin who is the ballet master and first choreographer of the Royal Danish Opera House, and who was also with the Marquis de Cuevas.

Unfortunately, this cannot be a permanent arrangement as Birger Bartholin will have to return to Denmark after a certain time.

ZAPATEADO and Antonio Ruiz—the two inseparable: there, caught in a shaft of light, is the slim dark figure in black emerging from the yawning black of the darkened stage.

In the throats of the spectators there is a dryness as their excitement mounts with every staccato beat. As he moves apparently motionless in the centre of the stage the volume grows, and faster goes the drumming of his feet. Gradually the beat quickens, and at the same time all becomes quieter, until finally all that is left is the silence. A long silence.

There is a pause (that moment of suspension that only follows complete absorption). Then the spell is broken and the emotions of the audience break loose and seek relief in tumultous and prolonged applause.

AGAIN

Such was the scene in 1951 and 1952; and now after one year's absence Antonio is returning again. But this time he will not be accompanied by his inimitable partner—Rosario; the partnership that started more than twenty years ago in the cafes of Seville has been broken.

It will be interesting to see how this young dancer has adapted his genius to the new circumstances, since it was for the perfection resulting from the perfect synchronization and absolute harmony of their movements that the world acclaimed this young pair.

Certainly he is different from any other Spanish dancer, for his performance is really a dance recital during which every aspect of his genius is utilised, and such is the complexity of his personality that he is able to provide a programme of tremendous variety entirely unaided by the support of a large company.

Indeed such a company would be superfluous. His repertoire covers the many styles of Spanish dancing, and his expressive face changes with each.

PEASANT

One time he is the simple peasant courting his girl in the naive manner that reminds one more of the Mexican of New Spain than of the proud, complex people of Spain. Or he is there dancing the *Jota*, that stylised courting dance that commences in such a lively but controlled manner, but becomes more and more impassioned as the dance proceeds.

Or again, he is characterising the arrogant, sensuous male of the *Cafe de Chinitas*, who dances himself into a frenzy as the spark flashes from his Amorata to him without contact, like an electric charge.

ANTONIO

who dances again at the Stoll this month.

By ANTHONY J. LOVEDAY

But it is in the *Baile Flamencos* that Antonio is truly at home; and this is not surprising when one remembers that the gypsy blood is not far beneath the surface. However he does not dance with the untamed abandon of the gypsy; all the movements of his lithe, and supple body are of a fine and unexaggerated style.

The vulgarity of the uninhibited is not his.

But words of description and praise are but a poor substitute for a visit to this remarkable dancer, who has that extraordinary ability for creating the atmosphere of sunny Spain in the bleak streets of London, and whose personality radiates such warmth that the sour wintry face of the Englishman beams as he shouts his 'Ole'.

PARIS POINTERS

—By Reyna

In the Technicolor film 'Les Cloches n'ont pas sonnees' (The Bells did not ring) Milhorad Miskowich partners Colette Marchand in ballets choreographed by Victor Gsowsky. The film is on the life of Liszt.

* * * *

At the Opera House at Mulhouse, on February 26, Ethery Pagava danced in the Opera Ballet l'Atlantide. *This rather original work is mainly operatic, however this young and well-known dancer took the principal role.*

* * * *

At the end of the season at the Opera, Marcel Delannoy will present his ballet Les Noces Fantastiques—*decors by the artist Daragnes—and Serge Lifar will direct the choreography*

* * * *

At the same time the Opera Management announce the presentation of Nauteos *with music by Madame Jeanne Leleu. This ballet was shown at the Opera in Monte Carlo in* 1947 *with choreography by Serge Lifar the principal roles were danced by Youli Algaroff and Yvette Chauvire.*

Ballet Forward

OWING to the fact that nearly all the important ballet schools have been closed for their Christmas vacation which stretched over the larger part of January, I decided to devote this month's article to the 'Prospects of a Dancer', giving a brief resume of what might happen to a student, when he or she has left dancing academy, at the completion of training setting out to earn a livelihood.

If a student has been fortunate enough to have been trained at a school such as the Sadler's Wells or the Rambert, the prospects of immediate employment are obviously much brighter, for over 85 per cent. of these respective companies intake is recruited from their own school; so although they will have to take their places in the corps de ballet, may be for quite a number of years, they do have a certain advantage over students who have been trained elsewhere; obviously a company such as the Sadler's Wells cannot accept everyone who has been trained at their school, for as the old adage has it 'Many are called, but few are chosen'.

FINANCE

There is certainly no great financial reward to be reaped whilst in the corps de ballet; a dancer may truly count herself fortunate if she is able to even average £7 per week for a number of years; she will have to work hard, with long arduous hours of rehearsing and more rehearsing.

By NICHOLAS VALENTINE

In time she may be lucky enough to get her chance, some more quickly than others, somebody may be ill, someone might be unable to appear for some reason or other, she being called upon to fill the breach. Then of course it is entirely up to her whether she grasps her opportunity, or lets it slip.

Progession is slow, unless there is outstanding talent, though those who possess such attributes are few and far between, but it is slightly easier for the male than for the female.

SPHERES

Many dancers eventually don the mantle of the choreographer, such names as Leonide Massine, Frederick Ashton, Andree Howard spring to mind, others such as Walter Gore and Roland Petit combine the role of dancer with that of choreographer. There are dancers such as Robert Helpman and John Byron, who have become celebrated in the spheres of acting.

Many dancers have gone into the fields of teaching, such as Laura Wilson, a former premiere danseuse at Covent Garden and a member of Diaghilev's Ballet, Ruth French, star of many London productions, Stella Mann, Pamela Foster and a host of others have now, or for some years run their own private schools.

There are others who have become renowned for their scenic and costume designs for the stage, some like Walter Crisham and Moyra Fraser have found fame in the small world of intimate revue. Dancers have become stars in musical comedies, more recently they have glided through the realms of ice skating to stardom.

In this article rather than concentrate on the progress and prospects of a dancer in any one particular company, I have discussed a few of the many fields and openings that might be available to a trained dancer; in the next issue of Ballet Tomorrow, I shall be discussing 'Life in a Ballet Company', taking for example the progress of a well-known English dancer from her student days.

WHO WAS THE FIRST DANCER EN POINTE ?

THIS is a question which has been much discussed, and about which much has been written without arriving at any definite conclusion. But, as we say in Paris, someone must have been the first, therefore only documentary evidence can assure us on this point.

We are showing here an interesting photo, a reproduction from an old print of von Schindler. The original picture is in Munich at the Theatrical Museum, it shows the dancer Rozier with Signorina Brugnoli, in the ballet *Psyche*, probably by Gardel.

By FERDINAND REYNA

The dancer's 'pointe' is most clearly shown without a possible doubt. Referring to this, it is interesting to quote an extract from the *Almanach de la Scala de Milan* dated 1827 which gives a criticism of the ballet *Dircea* which was performed on March 28, 1826 The choreographer was Louis Henry (born in France in 1776, and died in Naples 1836).

'We must now speak about Brugnoli, the dancer that we have witnessed grow up in our theatre, and of whom little has been said until her recent success in Vienna which has been proclaimed as extraordinary and quite unique. Brugnoli, with Vague-Moulin, and her partner Samengo, who is Amalia Brugnoli's husband. Everything that is most perfect, Brugnoli possesses—strength, ability, her steps, her "pointes", attitudes, and "turns" which amaze and hold the public in profound admiration. Educated at a very severe school (particularly with regard to deportment) she has reached a perfection that can almost be considered as faultless. Such faults, if any, can be regarded as perfect.'

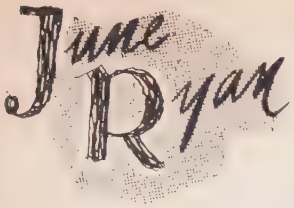
We have not made any further research with regard to Brugnoli. We can only state with certitude, that she made her 'debut' at the Scala in 1817 where she danced Cupidon in Vigano's *Prometheus*.

She danced for a long time in Germany, and in Vienna. She also spent a considerable time in Naples and appeared at La Scala, Milan, for several years.

From 1820-1825 she was at the San Carlo at Naples. At this time Naples was very much under the Bourbon influence, and there a ballet school was formed by the great dancers of the day. They gave performances all the year round at the Scala, also at the less important places.

But, to come back to our point, if any reader has any documentary information relating to Brugnoli which dates back earlier than 1827, we would be very interested to hear of it. Who knows, we might even be able to trace the 'pointes' to an earlier origin than that of Amalia Brugnoli!

PORTRAIT BY



MARJORIE TALLCHIEF

text

by

RICHARD AUSTIN

It is a tribute to Marjorie Tallchief's strong personality that one feels her to be wasted in the de Cuevas Company upon roles unsuited to her abilities. She is not a romantic dancer, yet she has in the past been required to dance in such works as Les Sylphides, Night Shadow *and even in* Giselle.

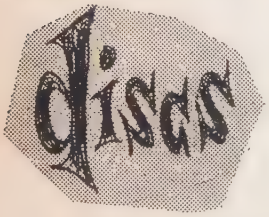
Her classical dancing is hard, sometimes forced and always dominating. She is able to give the absurd Don Quixote pas de deux *its full measure of brash excitement, without resorting to parody like Toumanova; but in lyrical roles she is unable either to subdue her powerful personality or to achieve much subtlety of expression. Her range is limited, but within it she is a dancer of rare intensity. One would delight in seeing her as Zobeide in* Scheherazade, *as the Siren in Balanchine's* Prodigal Son, *or as one of the Polovsian girls in* Prince Igor.

Only in Skibine's Prisoner in the Caucasus *has she been given a role that fully suits her. Fierce, exotic and sensual, full of strong emotion and high melodrama, this ballet provides her with a chance to dominate the stage which she takes magnificently. She has great powers of projection and the tragic parting between the lovers is beautifully conveyed. Such roles really belong to her, just as those which require highly expressive and lyrical dancing are outside her compass.*

It is unfortunate that the de Cuevas Company does not carry a repertoire capable of testing the resources of its dancers; for, apart from this one role, the recent London season has done no more than prove how magnificent Marjorie Tallchief might be in ballets she has no opportunity of dancing.

Like Nora Kaye she is a highly original dancer who is ill at ease in indifferent works.

Perhaps Skibine will one day be able to compose a ballet for her, which will become her's alone, as Anthony Tudor composed Pillar of Fire *for Nora Kaye, with whom it will always be associated.*



FONTEYN above, and SHEARER below in SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS

Symphonic Variations (Franck). *Symphony on a French Mountain Song* (Indy). Casadesus (piano) with, 1. Philharmonia Orch. (Weldon), 2. New York P.-S.O. (Munch). Columbia 33CX1118.

How beautifully Ashton linked his choreography to these variations! The ballet is in fact a masterpiece that will travel on into time long after most contemporary works are forgotten, and the dancing of its six original interpreters will always be something to remember. The smoothness of that performance is not reflected here—both pianist and orchestra are jerky and for the most part, devoid of lyrical feeling—the work is broken up and meaningless. Vincent d'Indy's symphonic work, which grows on one with playing, has fared much better.

Le Coq D'or Suite (Rimsky-Korsakov). *Le Chasseur Maudit* (Franck). R.P.O. (Beecham). Columbia 33CX1087.

Dobrowen gave us an excellent recording of the suite (Columbia 33SX1010) last month but there is no doubt whatsoever of Beecham's superiority—his exquisite phrasing and subtlety of colouring are rarely matched. He makes Le Chasseur Maudit live but Dobrowen's Tsar Saltan is good, so that the choice may be difficult when finance plays its part.

Eine Kleine Nachtmusik and *Symphony No.* 29. (Mozart). Perpigan Festival Orch. (Casals). Columbia 33CX1088.

Gsovsky's *Nocturne* for the Champs Elysees, in which Balmain created some of the most elegant 17th century dresses and Chauvire danced with exceptional beauty, was of typical Gallic flavour—a card game, a tryst, a duel. Here Mozart's serenade has not the elegance combined with gaiety that one expects, but it is a disc of musical interest, having been recorded during the unique Perpigan Festival organised by that great artist, Pau Casals. The same applies to the youthful but attractive symphony.

Romeo and Juliet Overture (Tchaikowsky). *Siegfried Idyll* (Wagner). Philharmonia Orch. (Cantelli). HMV. ALP 1086.

The overture has attracted many choreographers including, more recently, Skibine with *The Tragedy of Verona* for the de Cuevas, and Bartholin for the Royal Danish Ballet, the latter giving Schaffaus' fine elevation plenty of opportunity. Cantelli gives an excellent account of both sides and the recording is good.

Le Sacre du Printemps (Strawinski). New York P.-S.O. (Strawinski). Columbia 33CX1083.

Present day ballot audiences seem rather tame compared with those of four decades ago. To restore order between the two factions in the auditorium, Diaghilev has to call the police on the first night of Nijinsky's ballet as the dancers could not hear the orchestra—nor were they anxious to take their curtains! This is an interesting disc, being conducted by the composer, but I prefer that by Markevitch (HMV. CLP 1003)—who, incidentally, was discovered by Diaghliev—for its greater feeling and power.

Concerto in A Minor (Schumann). *Concerto in A Minor* (Grieg). Moiseivitch (piano), Philharmonia Orch. (Ackermann). HMV. CLP 1008.

George Hubert gave a full account of Nijinska's *Schumann Concerto* for Ballet Theatre, in our October issue, where the Rubinstein recording of the Grieg (HMV. ALP 1065), was reviewed. These two concertos are each as lovely in their own way as the other and Moiseivitch gives a satisfactory rendering of both. He is a little slow to get into the Schumann but his Grieg is infinitely superior to Rubinstein's, as is the recording.

Gayaneh (Khachaturian) New York P.-S.O. (Kurtz). Columbia 33SX1012.

Last month I gave the story of this ballet (also called *Gayne*) and reviewed Capitol's version which omits the four dances on one side of the Columbia. Thus Columbia is more complete but to some extent I preferred the other recording and Sevitzki's conducting.

Symphony No. 1 (Prokofiev). *Russian Easter Festival Overture* (Rimsky-Korsakov). Philadelphia Orch. (Ormandy). Columbia 33C1025

I admire Ormandy's attack which is needed for Tudor's *Gala Performance* but he can drive too fast to the detriment of the delicacy and grace that are no less necessary for Prokofiev. Its brightness of recording has not ensured clarity right through, so that all together I am still of the opinion that Markevitch's rendering heads the list of LPs. The reverse side did not convince me that Rimsky-Korsakov had much to say that was of interest when he composed the overture.

Les Sylphides (Chopin). *Divertissement for a Chamber Orchestra* (Ibert). Paris Conservatoire Orch. (Desormiere). Decca LXT 2868.

How difficult it is to get a perfect recording of *Les Sylphides* but Desormiere gives us a lot of enjoyment in spite of some poor tone from the oboe. Ibert's light and witty work is also well worth having with its many sly chuckles. He has composed a considerable amount for the French ballet companies with great success, and I sincerely hope some of it comes our way.

Le Carnaval des Animaux (Saint-Saens). Belgian Radio Symphony Orch. (Andre). Telefunken LGM 65013.

Ballets on animal themes are difficult to bring off but in Cecil Bates' work for the Ballet Rambert, his choreography is clever, yet simple and in the main full of feeling. This ballet made an excellent TV broadcast after Christmas with original use of lighting for the Swans. I have but one criticism: a tendency to hardness of tone in otherwise a first class record that you will undoubtedly enjoy.

dancers in town

Sheila O'Neill, the Command Performance dancer, seems to have become the resident ballerina of children's television . . . she appeared as the spirit of the New Year on the Children's Hour party and later in January took the leading role in **Sonya Hana's** schoolgirl ballet *The Lighter Side of School* . . . also in this production was **Katherine Beetham,** not so long ago a school girl herself . . . Later in the same week Sheila appeared in the television excerpt from *Paint Your Wagon* in company with **Prudence Hyman** who last year filled in the gap in her dancing career by becoming a bareback rider in the circus at Harringay . . . Prudence has also worked as a florist . . . When ballerina **Marina Swetlova** returned to New York after her appearances here she wore a small winged watch brooch to signify that if need be she could take over the controls . . . Marina hold a civil pilot's licence . . . The recently formed **Bert Stimmel** Modern Dance group have left London for cabaret in Barcelona arising from their appearance on TV's discovery show *Shop Window* . . . The group produce miniature ballets in the free dance idiom . . . the highlight of the repertoire being a Petitesque routine for six dancers and four chairs . . . On January 15 **Anton Dolin** flew back from Monte Carlo to have dinner with **Mona Inglesby** in London . . . this would seem to be more than a meeting of compatriots since Mona Inglesby holds the choreographic scripts of *Esmeralda* which Dolin's company will produce in the summer . . . **Yvonne Mounsey** of the New York City Ballet has rejoined the company after two months holiday in Britain . . . **George Skibine** has plans for a new ballet to **Bartok** percussive music, based on a painting by old Flemish master **Brueghel** . . . To dance or not to dance is the question facing eighteen-month-old **George** and **Alexander Skibine** . . . mother **Majorie Tallchief** says they may if they want to, but lessons will not be compulsary, although if the twins had been girls she would have definitely wished them to follow in her footsteps . . . father George Skibine merely remarks that his own father danced with the Diaghilev ballet and that with so many of the family in the theatre it will be difficult for them to avoid dancing . . . Ballerina **Rosella Hightower,** too, is thinking about starting a family sometime in the new year, but says she finds it very difficult to make the break with so many exciting dancing projects on hand . . . While in London Rosella Hightower has been catching up with her theatre going, and has visited matinees at the Old Vic to see *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night* and been to Drury Lane for *The King and I* . . .

Noelle De Mosa and Hans Zullig in Jooss' "Song of Youth"

Modern Dance, Health and the Body-Blow

IN modern Jazz, after the complexities of atonal and varied contrapuntal scoring by the big-sound arrangers (such as Kenton, Herman, Raeburn) and the tight little Bop groups under Gillespie, Parker and others, a new sound has arisen on America's west coast. This is the first time the Californian belt has achieved a musical progeny — New Orleans Chicago and New York having been the last half-century's trio of birthplaces.

But the overall description of their music by this new group (or school) of musicians—influenced almost equally by latterday Strawinski and current Kenton—is of interest: it is 'healthy'.

Now that is a new word. I am glad to welcome it. As a matter of obvious fact I feel possessive towards it. Healthy. If the arts in general and the dance in specific need a rejuvenator, the word health sums up its most potent characteristics.

REJUVENATOR

But do we need a rejuvenator or, having come as far in modernity as possible without succumbing to the contraceptive sterility of current modernism, should we start again? And if so, where?

Montague (of the *Manchester Guardian*) was vehemently in favour of language's acquisition of colloquial slang. But I doubt if he ever foresaw the contemporary climate where language in basic has a hard time getting into the mouths of babes weaned upon the garrulous language of radio, video and common denominator newspapers. Slang today is still fruity, as Montague would have had it, but now it is either technical jargon (you go to

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"HOW I AM OUT OF BALLET"

—at least, out of International Ballet.

Behind

THESE NAMES MAKE BA

By

MONA INGLESBY

AND HER DIRECTOR-HUSBAND

THE International Ballet is dead. Chief mourner must be the provincial British public, in those spots untouched by the bounty of the Arts Council such as Belfast where the International Ballet was the first visiting ballet company for thirty years. It would seem however that the Arts Council sincerely feel that their duties lie in providing subsidized culture for the metropolis rather than an even coverage of the country. In the year when the International Ballet could have been saved by the comparatively small sum of £10,000 from the Arts Council, £60,000 of its £75,000 budget for opera and ballet was spent on Sadler's Wells and Covent Garden.

However, in his statement to BALLET TODAY, Major Derrington of the International Ballet stresses that after the initial shock of seeing that fourteen years of careful work had come to a full stop, he has no bitterness or personal resentment against the Arts Council. He and his ballerina wife Mona Inglesby had long realised that unless support could be found the company would be forced to close.

Mona Inglesby

MR. DERRINGTON SPEAKS:

'It would be only too easy', says Major Derrington, 'to decry the Arts Council as a band of foolish old ladies, but such angry words can do no good. It is my belief that when we made our last appeal to the Arts Council in the latter part of 1953 they realised the value of our past work and would sincerely have liked to assist us. At that time they had not the finance available and so were compelled to refuse.

However this sympathic and knowledgeable attitude has not always prevailed. Our first appeal to the Arts Council was in 1942 for their sponsorship for tax exemption being at that time about the only form of cultural entertainment available to the public. This and our five subsequent appeals were brusquely refused and no apparent reason given.

I think had the Arts Council taken the trouble to go into the work of the International Ballet fully, it would have created a different division of its funds to include us, since when we appealed for the last time the Arts Council showed great interest in our work.

'However, I do think that even now the Arts Council has little understanding of the needs of the provincial audience. I think that its composition should include persons representing the north of England, and other districts.

'There is just as large and appreciative an audience for ballet, particularly classical ballet outside London, as in the immediate London area, yet the Arts Council allowance to Sadler's Wells amounted in 1953 to £3,750 per week of performance.

'Of the two companies in the organization the junior company toured for nine weeks and the main company did not visit the provinces at all. In no year of its life did the International Ballet spend less thant wenty weeks in the provinces.'

SHORTSIGHTED

'The policy of the Arts

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A shot from the 3D film made by Mona Inglesby last year

and the de Cuevas Dancer

Rosella Hightower Serge Golovine

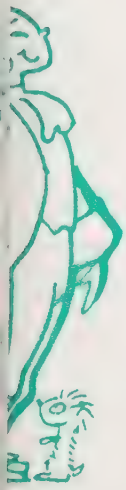
"WHY I AM IN BALLET"

—and what my dancers say of my being there.

By

MARQUIS DE CUEVAS

WHILE IN LONDON



THE Marquis de Cuevas is a sprightly figure, whose alert blue eyes and youthful appearance belie his seventy odd years as much as his mild manner belies his fabulous reputation. When asked how he came into the world of ballet he replied;

'I have never been a dancer myself, although I have always been interested in the theatre. In 1939 I found myself in New York. I was bored to death, because I had nothing to do, and I could not come to Europe because of the war. In New York at that time I found that there were many children, Italian, Spanish and other nationalities who could not attend the ordinary schools because of the language problem.

'I taught them to read and to speak but also to dance so that they would have a language common to all. After five years these children had made such progress that I created a repertoire of twelve ballets by ten different choreographers, some American, some European, for them.

The Marquis de Cuevas

'Soon my dancers became so well known that there were not adequate facilities to present them in America, so when the Monte Carlo authorities asked me to go and direct the ballet there I took with me the company which had then taken my name. We remained the resident ballet in Monte Carlo for two years.'

Do you think it is better for a ballet company to have a permanent home ot to travel?

'It is good for a company to have a permanent home.

'It gives them a chance to establish a tradition and to build luxurious sets without having to worry about transport difficulties, but my company is young, and it is right that they should meet a wider public and develop a broader outlook towards their work. We are now going to tour for a year.

'After London, we go to Cannes, then to Egypt, where we had a season three years ago, Rio de Janiero, Spain, Germany and then back to Paris.'

Do you think the audiences in London are ballet conscious?

'Yes, but they are very severe critics. It is impossible to bluff the London public. However, they have been very enthusiastic about my dancers and we hope to return to London very soon.'

What are your plans for the future?

'To create new ballets. Four or five every year by choreographers whose work I have seen and admired. When choosing repertoire, I choose what I personally like, and for the most part I find the public agree with me. Sometimes I make mistakes, because it is impossible to judge a ballet until it is seen in position, but when I make an error I am not

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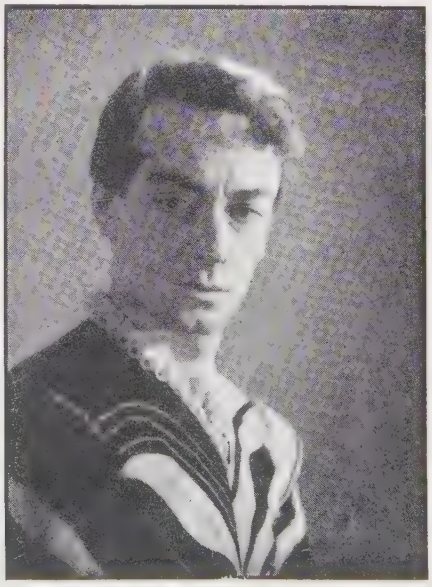
Wladimir Skouratoff

Marjorie Tallchief



George Skibine

BY EDITH BARKING

A. Glynne Owen writes; Is there a teacher of choreography in London whom I could go to?

The Royal Academy of Dancing are instituting a choreography course over two years and they will give you information. Otherwise I have no information.

May Tilney writes; Is there any dancing in the operas presented at Sadler's Wells Theatre?

Yes indeed. Several operas use members of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in their production, *Eugene Onegin*, for example, uses Sheila O'Reilley and twelve members of the company. *Die Fleidermaus* is another example which comes to mind.

B. L. Shackle writes; What has happened to Walter Gore and his company since their season at the Princes Theatre in London last year?

Gore is choreographing the new musical, which stars Anton Wallbrook, *Wedding in Paris*. The Gore Ballet are fulfilling intermittent road dates.

Stella Painton writes; Is there any regular 'stage' for the modern dancer in London?

No. The British Dance Theatre has inaugurated a centre at Toynbee Hall which may go some way towards providing such a requisite and others interested in modern dance are actively interested in acquiring a theatre for regular modern dance performances. It has not yet been properly tested whether there is, in fact, a public for this but the promised appearance in London of Martha Graham should prove or disprove the point.

Classifieds

FREE LESSONS in Modern Ballet offered in exchange secretarial work, typing essential, few hours and Saturday morning. London school near West End. Box MH 301.

CONTEMPORARY Dance Group invites dancers and musicians interested in experimental work and production of new ballets to write with particulars to Box MH 302.

WANTED R.A.D. Teacher for Amateur Evening Classes. London. Box MH 303.

BOOKS BOUGHT. All books on dancing purchased singly or in lots. Mention condition, price. Box MH 304.

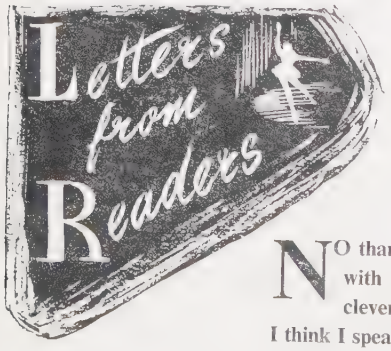
DIARY

Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden

March

2 **Coppelia** (new production, premiere) Nerina/Blair.
3 **Sleeping Beauty** (Fonteyn/-Somes).
4 **Coppelia** (Beriosova/Chatfield).
5 **Coppelia** (Nerina/Blair).
6 **Coppelia** (Mat. Navarre/Grant. Eve. Beriosova/Chatfield).
9 **Coppelia** (act 3, **Daphnis** and **Chloe, Homage** (Gala performance).
10 **Coppelia** (Navarre/Grant).
11 **Coppelia** (Beriosova/Chatfield).
12 **Sylphides, Daphnis** and **Chloe, Homage** (full company, inc. Fonteyn).
13 As above at matinee. Eve.: **Coppelia** (Nerina/Blair).
16 **Cinderella** (Fonteyn/Somes).
17 **Coppelia** (Beriosova/Chatfield).
18 **Cinderella** (Nerina/Rassine).
19 **Coppelia** (Navarre/Grant).
20 **Cinderella** (Mat. Nerina/Rassine. Eve. Fonteyn/Somes).
22 **Lac Des Cygnes** (Fonteyn/-Somes).
23 **Coppelia** (Beriosova/Chatfield).
24 **Lac** (Nerina/Rassine).
25 **Lac** (Jackson/Field).
26 **Veneziana, Homage, Patineurs** (Fonteyn).
27 Mat. **Coppelia** (Lindsay/Doyle). Eve. **Veneziana, Daphnis** and **Chloe, Patineurs** (Fonteyn/-Jackson).

1 **Martha Graham** at Saville Theatre (short season).



"CHAMBER BALLET? —NO, NOT FOR ME"

NO thank you. I can just see these 'chamber ballet' companies with bits of classics and baubles of Balanchine, their clever-clever little tricks and arty, depressing rambles. No. I, and I think I speak for most country balletgoers, want to see the classics.

What critics such as your Peter Craig-Raymond forget is that what is a boring repetition of, say, *The Swan Lake* for him (having seen it hundreds of times, in all probability) is to thousands of us a new experience. And a wonderful one.

So before you go stuffing chamber ballet down our throats—let us see some real ballet. After all they had to play Tchaikowski and Chopin for years before the public at large accepted better music.

(*Mrs.*) *Claude Thoehill,*
Dunfermline, Scotland.

The sad fact is that Mrs. Thoehill's tense is wrong in the last paragraph. They are STILL playing Tchaikowski and Chopin—and still the same pieces. The educative process has not even yet moved past first syllabus!

I do not propose the compulsory death of touring classics—I merely vented a solution to the death of such touring attractions. The classics, done well, require a fortune to tour—better see chamber ballet done well and economically than the classics drabbed on with pennypinching necessity.

Your first paragraph might be all too true—but in speaking of chamber ballet I meant what I described, not what you epithet. After all when I speak of experimental ballet I must not be clumped on the head with what passes for it in certain hothouses.

Your letters, as brief as possible, should be addressed to: BALLET TODAY, 15, Upper Brighton Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

EMERGENCE OF THE LITERARY BALLET

BALLET THEARE last year premiered, on television, THE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD. The ballet was based on the story by Ernest Hemingway. During February, John Steinbeck announced his intention of shaping a new short story as the foundation of a ballet. Within few months two of America's best writers have ventured into the dance media as a new outlet.

Is there, in this, a definite line of emergence or the literary ballet? In an era where riginal publication means but little to the vriter, compared to reprint, digest, paperback, adio, film and television rights, the use of allet as yet another by-source is not altogether urprising.

It is also true that the written word has a estraining limit at which even the broadest ocabulary will pinch. Especially with the ecessary tightening of vocabulary to meet oday's mass reading requirements.

JNREALISTIC

Perhaps ballet can give the writer the scope or factual abandonment which publishers nust now force him to eschew.

The constant seizing of outdoors, adventure nd circus setting by imaginative writers is . sign, perhaps, of their desire for more nrealistic work. Fantasy, magic, wili and ersonified good and bad are still palatable n ballet whereas the more mass-minded inema, publishing or airwave executives clamp down on such childishness. Flash Gordon yes, but Fairy Godmother . . . very rarely!

Ballet Theatre has already shown a lead here. I imagine that Balanchine might well be persuaded into using a literary synopis for his New York City Ballet. Sadler's Wells, under Ninette de Valois, is currently in favour of full-evening works—and the literary, plot-projecting ballet is apt for three act treatment.

Smaller companies, lacking 'star' names, might also find it profitable to be able to use 'star' writers' names on their billing. Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* was the major attraction of Danilova's Japanese tour, and she is to revive it.

Much of Williams' work—especially the masterly one-acters—is perfectly balletgenic There might even be scope for a Tennessee Williams' Ballet, with full-length *Streetcar*, *Menagerie* and *Summer and Smoke* plus half-a-dozen shorts!

A FEW

Eugene O'Niell has survived much transplanting. The operatic use of his marital pre-breakfast drama (recently heard on the B.B.C. Third Programme) was surprisingly interesting. Sean O'Casey, Singe, Ibsen, Strindberg and certainly more of Steinbeck, Hemingway and a few other American writers' work would be suitable for orientation in ballet.

Obviously it is not necessary to always reconstitute the whole of a written work. Papa Dumas, for instance, could be made a dozen of ballets from, say his *Three Musketeers* alone.

Take the Gascon's listening at the floor-boards as opening, his rush to defend the mercer's wife, their slow walk towards the Louvre (this a pas de deux) which is half in fear and half in coquetry and puppy love. Ending when the Gascon has his encounter with the Duke. Skibine could make a ballet of this—short, dark, regal and highly-tensed.

WEALTH

But there is such an obvious wealth of balletic matèral in classic, past and current literature that examples are like test-tubes of water when the river's at the door.

Has any choreographer the inclination? Any company the interest? The public will provide its share: incentive. I feel positive that the literary ballet might well be a new lever in ballet's ambition to garner a large scale audience.

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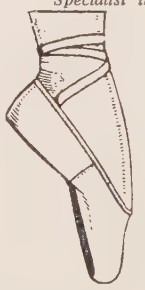

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Ballet In Review

—from page 6

butterflies is rather too vague and unformed to make a satisfying ballet.

Skouratoff dances well, Rosella Hightower's Queen is a staccato brilliant who fleckerls over the stage with a most apt insect-like twitter of dance.

The introduction, all-male, is unusual, acrobatic and quite effective. But this is no great ballet.

IDYLLE, by Skibine to Serrette music and costumed by Alwyne Camble, is one of the most endearing, attractive and cohesive short ballets I have seen. Very simple, it is the tale of a beautiful filly, her country stallion and a begauded, pseudo-military circus horse who steals her away with his tinsel-trappings—until she sees the prancing he must do and returns to her idylle love.

Marjorie Tallchief, in sequined white, looked magnificent, danced to match. Skibine's horse was introspective, black. Skouratoff well conveyed the circus hack. Altogether a fine short piece.

THE GRAY ANGEL, again by Skibine, uses orchestrated Debussy (sadly, including Clair de Lune) and is a rather more appealing **LILAC GARDEN.** A mother sees, in her daughter's romance, memories of her own young love. As the mother, ten minutes after her sparkling young role in **IDYLLE**, Tallchief looked the sadly beautiful woman who remembers her love, Skibine. As the two young lovers, Golovine and Gorham danced well, although Golovine is getting into a rut of quick 'at the first jump, 2,000 sat up' effects and too little concerted dancing.

LA SYLPHIDE only a few short months after the memorable Royal Danish production at Covent Garden was a gamble. That the gamble succeeded is a proof of this aged ballet's potential when given a dancer such as Rosella Hightower.

By some peculiar fancy this production looked, mainly when Hightower was on stage, very like an old staging. The decor by Dayde assisted this ably. Hightower, too, contrived to look a romantic ballerina and gave a support to the work which must make her indispensable.

The men, not quite the warriors of the Danes, were adequate, the corps dancing surprisingly good. I cannot say how long Lander worked the company on this ballet, but his production is a very, very fine achievement. Even Beatrice Mosena's Magda achieved its effect—and this against the six-month memory of Karsten's diabolical characterization for the Danes. Mosena deserved an accolade.

Denise Bourgeois was fresh and attractive as Effie, Golovine as James was excellent but Hightower's Sylphide made the ballet the long fragment of remembered beauty it must be. Here is one of ballet's museum pieces which has—with the Danes—lived long and here, with de Cuevas, survived its replanting into the hands of fresh creators.

The applause went, more than deservedly, to Hightower. I think the afterpraise must be Landers.

DEL AMOR Y DE LA MUERTE, another Ricarda ballet, was to Granados music and, apart from Tallchief and Skibine, was a merely inferior version of what Lopez can do so well. Emotions, in a long list, were portrayed to small sense. But the two principals had a fine pas de deux which lifted the work out of its facile meaninglessness.

TRAGEDY OF VERONA. Skibine's ballet is slightly travel-soiled but is again quite moving towards the end. Skibine's Romeo is a strong role and the Juliet of Andrea Karlsen looks very young—and aged right—indeed. I enjoyed.

Alicia Markova appeared as guest artist in the very moving **DYING SWAN,** which even she has never danced more in character than on its first night here. **PAS DE QUATRE** is still a period joke to putrid music, but Markova, Hightower, Moreau and Bourgeois carried it off well.

GISELLE. A fuller article appears on another page of this issue.

FEUX ROUGES-FEUX VERTS was more a production in the Petit manner by Louis-Bertrand Castelli than a ballet by Serge Golovine. This was Petit minus the humour, lightness and ease. Golovine's ballet (his first) of a street-seller with impossible dreams of love and glory who dies 'stupidly, but magnificently' came to the stage stogidly, but definitely.

Even Golovine's usually sure dancing was hurt by the uncertainty of the ballet—his first solo was danced very badly. The meek reaction of the audience must have hurt a dancer who has been given accolades for several years. But first ballets are rarely masterpieces. To be able to dance well is no full reason for a belief in one's competence to dream up contrapuntal ideas for twenty or more dancers.

Poor music, again Petit-reminiscent although a poor copy, was interrupted by a recording of an American powerhouse swing orchestra which provided dramatic, danceable music—surely to the discomfiture of Pierre Petit?

The 'queer quest for quaint' needs a humorous hand if it is to be anything more than a leftbank dirge in which existentialism appears to the creator like a first discovery of life's wickedness. I suggest a happy theme for Golovine's second ballet—he will have to work harder, but it will be more worth while.

GRAND PAS DE DEUX CLASSIQUE to Auber music by Gsovsky was too 'showy' and brittle on its first performance but, by the second evening, Moreau had becomes more restrained and exhibited a slow, tight pirouette and general strength of technique which was admirable. Not a very interesting pas de deux, but not entirely wasted.

* * *

In general the season showed a remarkable assembly of dancers with an unremarkable mixture of ballets. A rather heavy, over-dressed hand seems clamped upon much of the de Cuevas repertoire and rather much morbid thinking emanates.

But in a few ballets—**PIEGE DE LUMIERE, IDYLLE**—a good deal of imagination has been used, and to often good effect.

The loss of Rosella Hightower may help de Cuevas into a realization that many dancers do not guarantee much worth of ballet. What the de Cuevas ballet needs is a firm, bold artistic direction which would raise the drift-wood and start building along a defined policy line.

Markova's Giselle

A CRITIC can hardly help but come to a performance of a role such as this by a ballerina such as this with a mere cliche of praise. What can one say of Markova in the role of Giselle? By now she comes to it more as a dedicated—yet alive—archivist to whom every detail must be indexed before the volume is closed, complete. The patient deliberation to detail, the masterly covering of this work by a veil of ease, these prove the stature of Markova.

She could so easily romp through the ballet, missing a detail here, a whole expression there. Her fee would not suffer. Her audience would still applaud, go home in rapture. Yet she does not. She dances every performance as if it were her first—or last. As if her career, her future, her stature depended upon it. Or as if this was to be the last fleeting touch with a loved part.

IDEAL SURROUND?

One longs to drag the blase twenty-year-old, 'sick of that old dirge', to watch this dancer who has every success she could wish. Seeing fluffed and fickled mime, one wants to force the dancer to watch just Markova's *face* during her flirtation with the prince. Above all, perhaps, one wants to point out the incredibly young, warm, happy zest Markova brings to her first act.

The shyness, the proud—but still rather shy—look she gives her friends as the man she loves dances. And—I had never seen this before—the wonderful human blush as he asks her to join his dance. Markova blushed, or seemed to. She poured blood into a girl who can be a skindeep sketch.

Did Markova have the ideal surround? Hardly. The decor was atrocious and the whole production flagrantly distasteful and inept. The orchestra rose to the music but once or twice, mainly in the strings. The *corps* pranced idly through the folk dances and stodged through the second act. The costumes were poor and the pomp (as contrast to the poor villagers) was missing.

But in Skibine she had a partner of greatness —made even greater by an obvious pride in his partner. His variation in act two was the strongest I have ever seen in this ballet.

DEEPER THINKING

The tightness of the mad scene, too, was a lesson to dancers who seem to think the insane must be the flaying, flying inane. Markova danced the whole sequence at a slower than usual tempo, tightly reining her work to keep it spiraling inwards upon itself—a better, deeper thinking of the lover gone mad than any amount of hair-sweeping bravura could produce.

But there, I am back to Markova again. Past criticism—she is, like a loved painting or book, unfailing in proving a new light, a new phase of interest, a new minute detail of delight every time she appears.

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MANIPURI DANCING

MANIPURI, one of the four Indian traditional dance styles, originated in Assam where, somewhat like certain Russian sectors, dancing plays a highly predominant part in native life. The style was demonstrated, by courtesy of the Indian Students' Union in London, under the direction of Guru Bipin Sinha. Apart from Guru Sinha, the dancers were Savita, Nirmala and Mahendra Mehta.

A rich mime seems the more obvious quality of Manipuri dance which is tight in body movement and has less eye and facial accent that westernized Indian dancing we are oriented to here.

This demonstration, I take it authentic, was interesting in a scholastic sense. But its limitations in a theatrical setting are all too obvious and such displays as this are the answer to self-styled purists who condemn, say, Gopal for artifice and lack of authenticity.

Nevertheless there is no reason why authentic demonstrations such as this should not be given in small theatres at intervals. A very small audience will be found to interest itself in the religious dance culture from which the theatrical Indian companies derive their basis, but that does not make the interest of such an audience unimportant.

I would only add that even private demonstrations should be well stage managed. Apart from bad acoustics, wrong curtains and poor lighting, such bad faults as the house lights coming on several times during the performance are inexcusable. I was surprised to see Fernau Hall accredited as stage manager after such flaws.

GERMANY—*by Eva Buelow*

KURT JOOSS has again the possibility to establish his Dance Theatre, well known under the title Folkwang Tanztheater, with former soloists now under the auspieces of the City of Dusseldorf. Besides the Dance Theatre he will take over the running of the opera ballet and replace Yvonne Georgi, who will move to Hanover as ballet mistress and choreographer.

At the Hamburg State Opera Helga Swedlund was responsible for a very bad *Petrusshka* and the *Homeric Symphony* by Berger. The world premiere of this work was in Wien, idea and choreography by Erika Hanka, but in a very mediocre line. The principal dancers were Jutta Giesecke, Erica Lihn, Ulla Soederbaum, Heinz Schmiedel, Herbert Juzek and Claus Zimmermann. Decors by Alfred Siercke.

Dia Luca, a choreographer from Vienna created the dance sequences for a film with the soloists Willy Dirtl (Vienna State Opera) and Grety Sellier. The title is *Bei Dir war es immer so schon.*

Gertrud Steinweg, now choreographer at the Komische Oper, Berlin, has a sensational success with her new version of *Sheherazade.* She is an outstanding artist and it is very fortunate she got the position at this theatre in our capital.

BALLET—*Algeranoff (see 'In Ballet Today' on opposite page) who is now in Australia with the Borovansky Ballet.*

Macmillan Ballet – for Maryon Lane, a small masterpiece

KENNETH MACMILLAN'S ballet to Frank Martin music, LAIDERETTE, provided proof of Macmillan's choreographic span, the only worthwhile new piece of the Sadler's Wells Choreographic Group's January 24 programme, and a small masterpiece of a role for Maryon Lane.

A pierrot family abandon their daughter on a sidewalk, she is picked up by the host of a wealthy masked-ball party who falls in love with her until the masks are removed and she is discovered as bald. (This baldness, and a starched complexion, signifies something; what I could not find.) The parents then reclaim their daughter.

FIRST RANK

David Poole's dancing in this showed him as being able to project a character, not merely execute steps and hold positions. As the daughter, Maryone Lane was vivacious, strong and interesting. She will definitely attain first rank in the future.

Macmillan's choreography was professional, it developed plot surprisingly well and was thoroughly competent. But—more than this—he proves here that he has not fallen for cheap cliches of modernism or hack Balanchine. I would trust him with a major production after seeing LAIDERETTE; will the Wells?

SUGGEST

I would also suggest that this showcase for the Wells choreographic work becomes a more regular event, perhaps monthly. To find even a fifth of the evening's new work worthwhile is worth the trip to Rosebery Avenue.

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WHO'S WHO IN BALLET—A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF LEADING DANCERS, by Edith Barking

In Ballet today

PART ONE

Diana Adams. The New York City Ballet dancer had her first professional engagement in the original production of *Oklahoma* in 1943. During the following year she joined Lucia Chase's Ballet Theatre and danced in *Pillar of Fire*, *Giselle*, etc., before joining N.Y.C.B. Married in 1947 to Hugh Laing, also in the company, they separated during December, 1953.

Birgit Akesson was born in Sweden, joined the 'free dance' group of Mary Wigman in Dresden during 1931 and toured Europe, and the United States with Wigman, repeating this tour after a war-forced vigil in Sweden. Last year she choreographed and danced *Oga Somn I Drom* to Blomdahl music (based on the Lindegren poem) at Stockholm Opera House. She has choreographed a number of pieces including *Soir Bleu* and *Movement*.

Harcourt Algeranoff spent most of the war years in South America after an association with Colonel de Basil's Ballet Russe. In 1944 Mona Inglesby invited him to dance the doctor's role in her production of *Coppelia* and he subsequently joined her International Ballet permanently. He choreographed *For Love or Money* for the International Ballet in 1951, basing it on a Pavlowa item, and had it premiered under arena conditions at the Albert Hall. He married Claudie Algeranova (q.v.) who, with Inglesby and Armfelt, was a ballerina of the International. In 1953, with his wife, Algernoff appeared provincially with Dorothy Stevenson and Vladimir Brosko in the 'Ensemble de Ballet' group. This year they took up residence in Australia and are to appear with the Borovansky Ballet.

Claudia Algeranova. A ballerina of the International Ballet for some years, Claudia Algernova has now joined the Australian Borovansky Ballet, as has her husband Algeranoff.

Alicia Alonso was born in Cuba and, although she has made her success outside of that country, she has never broken her ties with Cuba or her interest in furthering ballet there. Married, at 15, to Fernando Alonso she has a daughter aged twelve. Arriving in New York Alonso and her dancer-husband joined the school from which Ballet Theatre sprung and, in 1939, joined the *corps de ballet* of Lucia Chase's new company. She was dangerously ill for some time in the early forties, rejoining Ballet Theatre and becoming prima ballerina in 1943. Her roles include Giselle, Odette/Odille and various *grand pas de deux*.

Carmen Amaya, Spanish flamenco dancer, made her debut at seven and, in New York, in 1941. Amaya has toured Europe, the United States, South America several times and appeared in London with her company. Argentina built the Amaya Theatre for her after her debut triumph in Buenos Aires.

Antonio was born in Seville and studied from a very early age under several of the finest Flamenco teachers, including La Quica. During the forties he was in the United States, returning to Madrid —to triumph—in the post-war years. With his cousin, Rosario as partner, Antonio toured most of the world dance centres, dancing several times in London —once in direct opposition to Jose Greco who was at Sadler's Wells while Rosario and Antonio were at the Cambridge for impresario Peter Daubeny. In 1952 the cousins quarelled and parted and now both head rival companies. Antonio was seen with his new partner, at the Stoll during February.

Sonia Arova

Sonia Arova was born in Hungary's capital city of Budapest and came to England during the early forties where she danced with the International Ballet and Ballet Ramber, becoming a Rambery soloist in 1944. In 1946 she joined the shortlived, ill-fated Metropolitan Ballet, in 1951 danced with Kirsta-resuscitated Original Ballet Russe and from there joined Anton Dolin's Festival Ballet. During 1952 she was invited to Japan as guest ballerina with the Komaki Ballet, returning to Festival Ballet for the Christmas season at London's Festival Hall and the succeeding Canadian tour. Just before that tour's end she severed her tie with Dolin and took up residence in Paris for further study. She is rumoured as a possible guest for Borovansky in Australia, concert appearances in England, a film in France and a place in Kirsta's Ballet Comique, now forming.

Frederick Ashton was born in South America, is now 48. He studied under Massine, had his first choreographic work produced by Marie Rambert in 1926—*Tragedy of Fashion*. Since then his ballets have included *Les Petits Riens*, *Des Masques*, *Apparitions*, *Les Rendezvous*, *Wedding Bouquet*, *Les Patineures*, *Les Sirenes*, *Symphonic Variations*, *Cinderella* and *Sylvia*. His association with the Wells began in 1933 and still continues.

B

Jean Babilee was trained at L'opera in Paris and made his debut after the war in Cannes before joining Le Ballet des Champs-Elysees. He danced the Young Man in Petit's *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* with the Champs-Elysees and remained with this company until 1950 when he left to join Le Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas. After a very few appearances for de Cuevas, Babilee returned to the Paris Opera and became the 'star attraction' of Lifar's ballet. During the autumn of 1953 Roland Petit invited Babilee to dance with his Ballets de Paris at the Stoll in London. Here Babille danced the wolf in Petit's *Le Loup* and, with Violette Verdy, danced the *grande pas de deux L'Oiseu Bleu*. Married to Natalie Philippart, also at the Opera, he has a daughter, Isabelle now six months old.

George Balanchine was born in St. Petersburg (Leningrad) in 1904 and graduated from the Imperial School in 1921. Three years later

To page 24

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raid to admit it. Of the five ballets I commissioned last year only three now remain in e company's repertoire.'

What in your opinion constitutes an ideal llet?

'I think that ballet should be dramatic. like my ballet to be about love and death, it I like the classical ballet and the dances Spain.

'My favourite ballet is *La Somnambule* to usic by Berlioz, which was choreographed for y company in 1946.'

We know you describe yourself as general rector. What exactly is your degree of fluence on new productions?

'It depends on the ballet. For *The Grey ngel* I chose the story, the designer and the usic, and explained the dance steps to my oreographer who translated them into their esent form, however sometimes I leave such atters entirely to my artists.'

How do you choose dancers, and will you be eking any new ones while you are on tour?

'Most of my dancers I have known, like osella Hightower, since they were students.

INTERNATIONAL

—from page 14

ouncil is shortsighted in the extreme. ithin a year, I predict that the Arts ouncil will be forced to create and sponsor new company to fill void left by the ath of the International. By that time e company will be irrevokably dispersed. ven if it were possible to gather all e artists together again their continuity training and performance would be lost.

'Since no major company, performing full ale classical ballet, can hope to be self pporting, such a project would be infinitely ore expensive to the council than issuing grant to the existing company.

'The International Ballet have never asked r complete maintenance by outside bodies. ven at the time of their death, they were le to meet their overheads. The grant was eded to sponsor new ballets to keep the terest of the carefully built up ballet audiences l over the country.'

ISS INGLESBY

Mona Inglesby, ballerina and artistic rector of the defunct company tactfully frained from comment on the decision of the rts Council.

But she endorses her husband's view that eir policy is 'shortsighted'. She points out at: 'No other company has the facility to produce the classical ballets accurately since alone hold the choreographic scripts of these orks, recorded by the Stepanov system, and itrusted to me by the dying Nicolai Sergueeff. is shortsighted to allow the disintergration a large unit of dancers trained in these orks since such a high degree of co-ordination id co-operative artistry can only be built up by e systematic training and years of performing gether as in the International Company'.

"Why I am in Ballet"

By THE MARQUIS DE CUEVAS

—from page 15

'Marjorie Tallchief I saw as a student at a Nijinska class and asked her to join my company.

'George Skibine I met at a party when he had decided to give up the theatre, but I persuaded him to return.

'When I employ dancers from outside sources I look for talent and technique but I also train and educate them myself until they fit the pattern of my company.

'I look upon my dancers as my children and I like them to regard me as a father, but my company is full now. I have too many stars, and the company is too large to travel easily.'

After de Cuevas' views on his dancers, his principals speak about de Cuevas.

Serge Golovine says: 'The Marquis de Cuevas is an amazingly clever man, perhaps the only man in ballet today who is able to give his dancers full facilities to develop their individuality'.

Rosella Hightower says: 'I have known the Marquis de Cuevas since I was a student, although I suppose he would say since my childhood, because he looks upon all of us as children. I think he is the most extreme person I have ever met. If he is happy he is very happy. If he is sad, he is very sad. If he is in a bad temper then he can be very cross indeed, but if he likes you its wonderful because nothing is too much trouble for him to do for you'.

Vladmir Skouratoff says: 'I joined the company of the Marquis de Cuevas, not only because of the high salary he pays his dancers but because he shows a real interest in the work of his dancers and is willing to support them in every possible way'.

Majorie Tallchief says: 'The Marquis de Cuevas is very pleasant to work for. He is temperamental, but so kind hearted and generous. I should say he was a very good employer'.

George Skibine says: 'The Marquis de Cuevas is very easy to work for. Speaking as a choreographer, he is always willing to see the other person's point of view. Even if he personally dislikes a ballet or does not believe in it, he will give it a fair showing. If a new work is a failure he is never annoyed because he says only by actual working experience and sometimes making mistakes can a young choreographer learn his trade'.

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ballet to-day

From page 21

he left the by-then Sovietized Russia and joined Diaghilev in France, later joining de Basil. He tried to run his own company, failed, and went to America at Lincoln Kirstein's suggestion to open a school of ballet in New York. As director of this school Balanchine became associated with various companies, Broadway musicals and films before using the school's product as the basis for the New York City Ballet which he has led ever since.

Irina Baranova was one of Colonel de Basil's 'baby ballerinas' at the age of thirteen, first dancing in 1932.

Keith Beckett is English, was taught at the Vera Todd school in Wembley before a scholarship took him to Cone Ripman. In 1946 he won the Adeline Genee medal and appeared in several musicals from 1948 on. These included *High Button Shoes*. In 1950 joined Festival Ballet, dancing in *Petrouchka* and, creating the Mad Hatter, in *Alice in Wonderland*. During the summer of 1953 he married dancer Diane Monks, mainly known in cafe work.

Svetlana Beriosova is the daughter of Festival Ballet regisseur Nicholas Beriosoff. She has danced with the Metropolitan and the Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo before joining Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. Now with the parent Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden Beriosova created the leading role in *The Shadow* last year.

Oleg Briansky, of Russian parentage but born in Belgium, he organised a company of dancers to appear in Brussels' Palais des Beaux Arts—when he was only fifteen. Fifteen thousand people turned out for the debut. In 1945 he joined Ballet des Champs-Elysees as a *corps de ballet* member, leaving and joining Roland Petit's Ballet de Paris in 1949. With Petit he went to New York for the American tour which ended in Hollywood. In 1951 was invited by Dolin to join the Festival Ballet and partnered Arova in the *Quixote grand pas de deux* as the most popular item on Festival's programme. During 1953 he married French dancer Mirelle Lefebre and they have now joined the Australian Borovansky Ballet.

Donald Britton. Soloist with Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet.

Erik Bruhn was a soloist with the Metropolitan Ballet in 1949, leaving to join the Royal Danish Ballet in Copenhagen at the break up of the Metropolitan. He was seen with Petit and Rene Jeanmaire in Goldwyn's film *Hans Christian Anderson* last year.

Domini Callaghan was with the Metropolitan Ballet during its lifetime and became well-known through her television appearances in *Ballet for Beginners*. Married to Michel de Lutry she has appeared in the provinces and, in London, with the Walter Gore Ballet at the Princes Theatre in 1953.

Leslie Caron, born to quite wealthy parents, studied in Paris at the National Conseravtoire before becoming the proverbial 'star overnight' when she created the Sphinx in Lichine's *La Recontre*. Caron was then 15. She danced with the Champs-Elysees until Gene Kelly auditioned her and took her to Hollywood for *An American in Paris*, the Gershwin film. Since then she has filmed in *Glory Alley* (released to a very limited extent in Britain), *Lili*, and *Story of Three Loves*. During 1954 is to make *Montmartre* and *Glass Slipper* for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and is being approached for a cabaret appearance in London, probably to follow her cabaret debut in Las Vegas, Nevada. In December 1953 Roland Petit created a modern *Sleeping Beauty* for Caron and she danced the role of Cora, the tightrope walker. Not successful, the ballet was withdrawn from Petit's repertoire and, in New York, Caron danced *Deuil en 24 Heures* with Petit. She married meat-heir George Hormel soon after her arrival in California but will be divorced this year. Caron sums herself up: 'I have the luck'.

Janine Charrat was discovered by Serge Lifar and trained at the Paris Opera until she left, in company with Roland Petit, to give the several recitals which led to Petit's first company and Charrat's joining that company—the Champs-Elysees. Later she danced with the Noveau Balle de Monte Carlo, and in London with Festival Ballet in 1952. In 1953 she formed her own company and gave a Paris season. She is expected in London this year.

Yvette Chauvire was a Lifar protege of the Paris Opera and the Milanese school, but was trained extensively by Boris Kniasev in whose ballet *Berioska* she appeared. In 1941 she danced *Istar* for Lifar and was appointed etoile in 1942. She later danced with the Monte Carlo and Festival Ballets—being suspended by Lifar in 1951 'for appearing in London in a poor quality show'. She returned, however, as guest ballerina to the Opera in 1953 and again danced with Festival during 1953.

...briefly

ROLAND PETIT, with a cold, was out of the Broadway, New York season of Ballets de Paris for four performances . . . **Jose Ferran** substituted . . . The management, by the way, is having to pay £200 a week extra to cover the cost of adding 'by permission of M.-G.-M. under **Leslie Caron's** billing . . . New York City Centre (New York City Ballet) are to issue their own magazine, *Centre* . . . Sadler's Wells grossed over two million dollars on its American tour . . . **Harold Lang** will open in London with *Pal Joey* (Hylton) in April . . . **Agnes de Mille** has broken new, vast ground for choreographers: apart from fee, expenses and extras, she gets 10 per cent. of the profits and shares all subsidiary rights . . . this establishes choroegraphy as a basic essential with equal rights to author and producer . . . the musical *Girl In Pink Tights* . . . stage mishaps brought sour first night notices to Petit's New York opening, but first six performances brought £13,000 to the box office . . . 'as disastrous an opening night as any ever witnessed' was the description . . . New York's avid fire department tore the decor to pieces to refireproof it . . . **Verdy** and Petit stole the reviews . . . Simple review in *Variety* of **Balanchine's** new *Opus* **34**: 'We no like' . . . a series of films lensed in Italy by the **Katherine Dunham** group may be seen on B.B.C.-TV late this year . . . Apart from *Montmarte*, Leslie Caron will also make *The Glass Slipper* for M.-G.-M. this year . . . **Fred Astaire** and **Dolores Gray** will team for the same studio in *French Quarter* and other upcoming Metro films include *St. Louis Woman* with **Gene Kelly** and *Kismet* with **Cyd Charisse** . . . Tom and Jerry, the film cartoon cat and mouse pair, are to star in 200 *Mice And a Cat*—which shows a 200-piece mouse orchestra playing **Tchaikowski's** *Casse Noissette* suite! . . . The current issue of *Chrysalis*, the American monograph, is devoted to an article by Baird Hastings on the Danish composer **Carl Nielson** . . . The issue boasts a happy etching of the Nielsons by **Anne Marie Telmanyi** and an unrelated poem, Emancipation, by **Geoffrey Johnson** which made its meaning, and was lit by several good phrasings . . . promising English dancers are welcome to compete in the ballet section of **Congress des Espoirs** and any dancer interested should contact BALLET TODAY . . . In between filming for Universal, **Ludmilla Tcherina** is rumoured to be planning her own ballet company in Paris . . . another group of Soviet dancers has been sent abroad—this time to Italy . . . **Istvan Rabovsky** and **Nora Kovach** appeared for five weeks during January-February at the Thunderbird, Las Vegas—one of the major cafes in the United States . . . since her break with partner Anton Dolin, ballerina **Markova** has emerged as a new personality . . . Shaking off her habitual reserve she now chats gaily to journalists about subjects ranging from plumbing to Marilyn Monroe, and was reported in the *Daily Express* as making racy comments about other dancers . . .

"Ragged . . . Half-hearted . . . Lackadaisical . . ."

But please be kind and cheer

ONE of the most incredible pieces of writing to come from an experienced critic appeared in the February issue of the ballroom and ballet monthly, *Dancing Times*. Written by P. W. Manchester, Managing Editor of the New York *Dance News* (not to be confused with the large-circulation London *Dance News* weekly) the letter begs the audience at Covent Garden

'not to be disappointed or disgruntled if for several weeks after its (Sadler's Wells) return you find the performances seem ragged, half-hearted and generally lackadaisical'.

This is written, as a charitable letter, on behalf of a great, professional and succesful ballet company. 'Don't kill the pianist, he's doing his best' may fit the slurged sop of the Hollywood sob-sister . . but it hardly adheres with any right to an informed critic.

Even a publicist would never say this of a professional theatre attraction taking money at the box-office. I imagine the press and advertising executive of Covent Garden were as thunderstruck by the damning charity as London critics were by the dilettantism.

HELP?

Does Miss Manchester think that ballet is still in a suburban theatre club with mothers and friends as audience, gossip as criticism and brewing coffee as fresh air? What is this talk of kindness, patience, this premeditated belief that the Wells will disintegrate with illness, injury, dancers half-sleeping and a cracked discipline?

Does Miss Manchester think that by prophesying all this she is helping the Wells? Can she think of any other theatrical venture which ever opened for sympathy in this way?

Dancers, says Miss Manchester, are going to 'dance rather worse' and performances will 'fall below their usual level'.

FLAT

And here is the statement to sound death knell to any theatre: 'When a performance falls flat it is often the fault of a house that fails to respond in the beginning'.

IN MY YEARS IN THE THEATRE I HAVE NEVER HEARD EVEN THE LOWLIEST PROVINCIAL REPERTORY THEATRE GIVE VENT TO SUCH NONSENSE. THE AUDIENCE IS IN THE THEATRE TO BE PLEASED BY THE FINEST PERFORMANCE POSSIBLE. THEY WILL CHEER OR DAMN AT THE PROPER TIME — WHEN THEY HAVE SEEN THE FULL PERFORMANCE.

This letter is a professional slur on a fine company and a psychologically inept insult to the audiences the Wells will attract. At no time has the Wells asked for its audiences' charity—its stature is too sure to need begging-letters in advance.

Miss Manchester may, as she says, find American critics more lavish in their praise than the London group. But we need no lesson from New York on how to appraise our home ballet.

BETTER

I think the dancers at the Wells will feel better in the knowledge that if we praise it is because they are honestly worth praising—and if we damn it is because they are worth our personal interest in their success and well-being.

I have yet to hear one Wells dancer ask for my charity. They hardly need it. And Covent Garden still invites my presence as a critic, not as an appeals organiser.

Perhaps that is why the Wells is the company it is.

A great number of letters have been received from readers 'infuriated' by the letter mentioned above. A selection may be published in the next issue of BALLET TODAY.

THE NEW BALLET TODAY

ANNOUNCING last month the NEW, larger-sized BALLET TODAY we indented three major steps taken by the publishers of this magazine. In April a fourth change is made which will make stronger BALLET TODAY's contention that it is the very finest value in dance journalism.

Remaining at 1s. a copy BALLET TODAY will, by a technical improvement, increase the amount of reading matter and illustration on each page and so again gives extra—without price increase. And, of course, we have now added more pages.

With April we would ask every reader to PLACE A REGULAR, FIRM ORDER (or subscribe 15s.) so to make positive of your copy. Very few extra copies of BALLET TODAY can be printed because of our resolve to keep to 1s.—so please help your newsagent by ordering. He hardly likes to say ,Sold out' when you call and we hardly like you to buy a more expensive other publication merely because BALLET TODAY is unavailable.

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FROM PAGE SEVEN

ballet digest

THE core of the Borovansky Ballet's January opening night programme was *Symphonie*, and as this ballet has not been seen in Australia since the visits of the Russian company it re-awakened much interest.

The ballet has been re-created by Kiril Vassilkovsky (fairly faithfully to the original), and from the aspect of dancing and production was most spectacular. Unfortunately, however, the spirit and mood of the ballet seems to have been lost entirely. The illusory effect of the young musician's drugged opium dream seems non-existent.

Rather than follow the Young Musician and his Beloved through the ballet with spots and lighting variations, the lighting remains almost completely flat and static throughout the whole performance. The ballroom scene, in particular, lacked atmosphere completely, and was ruined by over-lighting. The pastoral scene, which one expects to be tranquil and poetic, appeared vulgar and unfinished, and the costumes were designed in obvious shades of mauve, pink, green, etc. Some of the costume designs for this scene were quite disastrous.

The famous pas-de-deux went for nothing. Vassili Trunoff as the young shepherd lacked all the necessary qualities, and if he is to continue this role his over-athletic appearance must be killed as much as possible. The corps is excellent, very disciplined (almost 50 in corps).

Nevertheless, the last two scenes are particularly good and in the correct tradition. Paul Hammond strikes the right Daumier note as the Jailer, and Paul Grinwis as the Young Musician captures the mood of romantic agony excellently. Anna Mariya Vamszer as the Beloved certainly lacks Toumanova's electrifying quality as the Witch in the last scene, relying over-much on facial expression, but in spite of this obvious defect her performance was good.

The production could have been excellent, however it lacked that extra something of taste and sincerity; something that Mr. Borovansky has never been able to capture.

Beau Danube was excellent in almost every way. Claudie Algeranova as the Street-Dancer gave the company a tremendous lift. She is extremely chic and soubrettish in the role, in fact, the best we have seen here for many years. It is most unfortunate that she never had the opportunity of appearing in this type of part overseas. Christiane Hubert (the First Hand), Raoul Celada (the Hussar) and Eve King as the Daughter all give finished performances, although even this ballet was a little overtomped on the opening night.

KENNETH MACMILLAN's short ballet *Laiderette* (which is reviewed in this issue) after a first sight at Sadler's Wells Choreographic Group has been accepted for the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet repertoire.

ANOTHER folk dance short film has been completed, this time using the State Folk Ensemble of Hungary. In colour the film contains the Sarkoz three-hop, a difficult bottle-balanced-on-head dance and one to Liszt's second rhapsody.

MODERN Dance teacher HILDE HOLGER will present her students on April 4 at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre in a performance of several new works. These will include one to Poulenc music, *The Story of Babar the Little Elephant* and, to Schubert, *Old Vienna*. Advance booking is being accepted by the school, GUL 6822.

Now generally released—GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES. In this shot Marilyn Monroe is singing the film's theme; 'Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend'. Marilyn also appears—and dances again—in another Fox film, HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE, a second and better CinemaScope production.

MOST ballet dancers working with professional companies should have received a copy of the BALLET TODAY questionnaire by now and be returning this. Will any dancer who, by error, has not received the questionnaire write or telephone the Editor, Peter Craig-Raymond at 13 Mortimer Crescent, N.W.6 (MAI 5579) as we wish the current index to be as biographicaly complete as possible. Meanwhile we thank those who have speedily returned their copies.

MARJORIE TALLCHIEF has joined the reorganised Monte Carlo Ballet and is on leave from New York City Ballet.

CHOLITA RIVERA will dance on the Yma Sumac Albert Hall programme on April 25.

NEXT MONTH

ON THE COVER—VALERIE TAYLOR

DANILOVA

Speaks on Ballet

COPPELIA

THE NEW PRODUCTION

Modern Dance—from page 13

the theatre, dear reader, but will you tell me what a stubbie, a nabe and a splitstand is?) or a substitute for straight language—on a par with word-swallowing.

Ballet today has become a digest of restricted technisms with an intermittent inocculation of 'slang' lifts, turns and holds. We would be persuaded that this slang constitutes a new language, is not ballet at all.

DIVERGENT

So we have a fair number of divergent dance types—mainly recoiling around the classic ballet (stunted by a belief that tradition is synonomous with criteria) and 'modern dance' equally stunted by a need to be 'different' or, as a young Australian dancer well phrased it last month, 'a need to dress up to character and period in full—then come on barefoot!' The ritual is chilling, the flesh and blood of a new force is weak unto non-existent!

Obviously the effect of this modern dance should be felt on dance in general. Perhaps it needs a bodyblow of real intensity. Perhaps it must be so brash, young, eager, vulgar, and new that it must have its attention. It will be hated, loathed, despised . . . but it will have arrived.

FJORDS

At the moment the workers in modern dance are separate, hardly visible fjords on the bleak, withering-away coastline of contemporary traditional ballet.

In Scots we might ask them not be to 'fjord' —but to be fired. A river in full spate may not be liked by the countryman—but it breaks its banks and irrigates new land.

And irrigation is badly needed if the swarms of traditional-upholding carrions are to be routed and that quality I started with brought in: health.

Will the modern dance teachers and dancers gamble on the bodyblow?

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